Over-Enrolled and Under-Served: Quantitative Evidence of Administrative Obstruction in EU Medical Education

Abstract

This document provides a comprehensive legal and quantitative analysis of the issue of structural overcrowding within Hungarian medical education, with particular emphasis on Semmelweis University. Utilizing administrative data regarding student admissions and withdrawals, along with international standards for cadaver-to-student ratios, it clarifies how excessive enrollment directly hampers access to essential resources and results in increased failure rates. According to legal obligations, universities are mandated to ensure conditions conducive to students completing their studies upon admission. Conversely, inflated enrollment figures are exploited as a revenue-generating measure, with high attrition rates serving as a filtering mechanism. Such practices constitute violations of Hungarian higher education legislation, **EU Directive 2005/36/EC,** and international accreditation standards.

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1. Introduction

Hungary has emerged as a major hub for international medical education, attracting thousands of students annually. Semmelweis University, its flagship medical school, has positioned itself as a global institution with programs in Hungarian, English, and German. However, the promise of quality training is undermined by structural overcrowding. Facilities are congested, specimens mutilated, and dropout rates used as filters. This paper links quantitative intake/dropout data (Wardhan, 2025; Pusztai et al., 2022) with overcrowding evidence, situating the problem within legal and accreditation frameworks.

2. Methods & Data

Enrollment data indicate that Semmelweis University has an approximate total of 14,000 students, with around 5,300 enrolled in medicine (Semmelweis University, 2023). In the academic year 2024/25, approximately 3,900 freshmen were admitted across Hungarian, English, and German programs (Semmelweis University, 2024). Administrative records (Wardhan, 2025) reveal disproportionately elevated dropout and failure rates. Data at the national level corroborate this trend: of the 2,391 students who commenced medical training in 2010, the **overall attrition rate was approximately 47.8%.** International students experienced a dropout rate of ***approximately 67.5%,*** in contrast to 20.3% among local students. Financial aspects also influenced these outcomes: ***77.1% of students who initially financed their studies independently withdrew, compared to only 13.2% of students funded by the state.*** Those who transitioned from state-funded to self-financed roles during their studies exhibited a **dropout rate of 68.8% (Pusztai et al., 2022**). Benchmarks for international cadaver-to-student ratios include Korea at 7.4:1 (Kim et al., 2024), with an ideal ratio being less than or equal to 10:1 (Mutalik & Belsare, 2016), and an optimal Western standard of 4–5:1 (McLachlan & Patten, 1998). Applying these standards to Semmelweis University suggests that hundreds of cadavers would be necessary. Evidence indicates ratios significantly exceeding these norms, which are associated with overcrowding and increased attrition.

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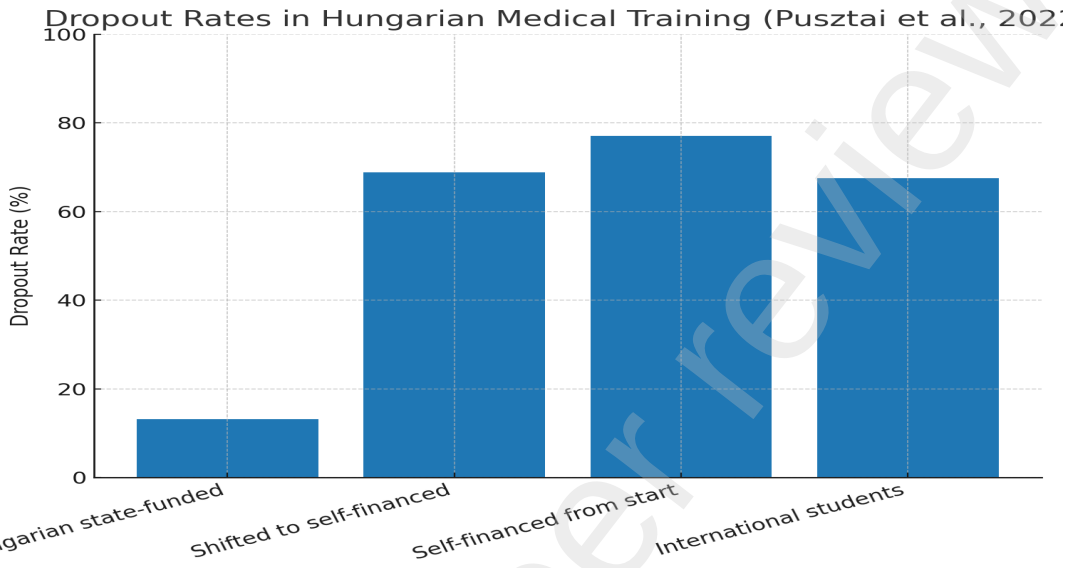
Figure 1. Dropout rates by student group in Hungarian medical training (Pusztai et al., 2022).



3. Legal Framework

Hungary: Act CCIV/2011 mandates the provision of practical learning conditions; **Act CLV/1997 safeguards students as consumers**; Fundamental Law Article XI assures the right to education. European Union: **Charter of Fundamental Rights Article 14**; **Directive 2005/36/EC stipulates 5,500 hours of adequate training**; ESG Standards require proportional resource allocation. International: **UNESCO 1960 Convention**; **ICESCR Article 13; WFME Standards; ECFMG 2024 Regulation.**

4. Results: Correlation Between Over-Enrollment and Attrition

Administrative data (Wardhan, 2025; Pusztai et al., 2022) demonstrate a strong correlation between enrollment surges and attrition rates. In overcrowded years, failure rates rise sharply, especially in anatomy-heavy first years. Qualitative evidence (Appendix B) shows mutilated specimens and obstructed access. Together, these findings show attrition is not natural selection, but a predictable consequence of over-enrollment (Semmelweis University, 2024).

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5. Policy Implications

Universities cannot lawfully admit students without providing conditions for completion—dropout rates linked to resource denial breach Hungarian and EU law. Policy recommendations: cap enrollments, audit cadaver/faculty ratios, enforce EU **Directive 2005/36/EC, require WFME/ECFMG compliance**, and grant consumer remedies to students.

6. Conclusion

Overcrowding at Semmelweis constitutes a systemic administrative obstruction. By admitting significantly more students than the available facilities can accommodate, the institution infringes upon Hungarian, EU, and international legal standards. Attrition is artificially induced, rather than a genuine indicator of merit. Unless this issue is addressed, it threatens the rights of students and the international credibility of Hungarian medical degrees.

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